The two Governments are agreed that, in view of the humanitarian aspect of the problem faced by poor people for whom fishing is the only means of livelihood, the matter should be dealt with in a practical and compassionate manner.

Separately Government of Tamil Nadu has taken measures to contain the problem of our fishermen straying into Sri Lankan including (i) publicity against poaching (ii) stringent action such as heavy fines and revocation of fishing licenses (iii) a committee chaired by State Minister of Fisheries, has been set up to look into their problems (iv) the 1983 Marine Act is to be amended to merge with the Deep Sea Fishing Act to make it more stringent (v) educating fishermen on alternate livlihoods.

(d) Detention of Indian Fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities as on 31.03.03.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	In SL custody
Fishermen arrested	55	26	25	85	116	168	
Fishermen released	53	24	24	85	115	138	
Released on bail	2	2	-	-	-	-	
Escaped	-	-	-	-	1	-	
Died in detention	-	-	1	-	-	-	
Fishermen currently in custody	-	-	-	-	-	30	30 as on 31.03.03

Evacuation of NRIs from Gulf

3005. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have initiated any arrangements to evacuate the Non-resident Indians from Kuwait and other gulf countries in the event of war;

(b) whether Government consider to depute a study team to Kuwait and UAE to take stock of the safety measures of NRIs;

(c) how many families belonging to Kerala have since been evacuated from Kuwait after commencement of the war;

(d) whether Government would arrange to introduce additional flights for their evacuation with concessional fares;

(e) whether any foreign Air lines Companies levy exorbitant rates from the evacuated families; and

(f) if so, whether Government consider to intervene in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) In anticipation of the outbreak of hostilities in Iraq, the Government had drawn up contingency plans to evacuate Indians from Kuwait through Saudi Arabia, if necessary. However, the international airports in Kuwait and all other Gulf countries have remained open to scheduled commercial flights since the beginning of hostilities and no request has been received for evacuation of Indians.

(b) No.

(c) to (f) Do not arise.

Indo-U.S. agreement for Mutual Cooperation

3006. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and the U.S. have formally put behind the so-called 'sanction regime' by signing an agreement in Feb. 2003 for greater mutual cooperation in the critical trinity areas of dual use technology, nuclear and space sciences;

(b) if so, the terms of the agreement;

(c) the follow up action in pursuance of the agreement; and

(d) whether similar sanctions imposed on Pakistan have also been lifted by the U.S.; if so, how much of aid has been released to Pakistan thereafter?